

**Role of Local Fishermen on Coral Reef Zoning in Phuket, the Andaman Sea**  
**T. Yeemin(1), N. Kraipanond(2), C. Lojaya(1)\*, W. Suepala(1) and D. Choeitong(1)**

*(1) Marine Biodiversity Research Group, Faculty of Science, Ramkhamhaeng University  
Huamark, Bangkok 10240, Thailand*

*(2) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural  
Resources and Environment, Rama VI, Bangkok 10400, Thailand*

Phuket has been recognized as a popular tourist destination in Thailand. There are approximately 17 km<sup>2</sup> of coral reefs in Phuket Province that have been utilized largely for tourism activities for many years. Coral reef zoning for utilization is an important strategy for coral reef management in Thailand. We conducted a quantitative assessment of local fishermen concerning coral reef zoning. The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning and consultants prepared the first draft of coral reef zoning as a result of discussions with relevant agencies and experts. The focus of this study was concentrated on the importance of community participation from the initial phase of planning until the implementation, assessment and monitoring processes. Preliminary implementation was accomplished through the cooperation of government authorities, local district administration, stakeholders and local people. Assessment of the coral reef zoning implementation was periodically evaluated in order to properly revise the draft. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Phuket Province were the key agencies in finalizing the draft as regulation. The coral reefs have been classified into 3 zones, i.e., reef managed for general uses, reef managed for tourism and recreation (intensive tourism and ecotourism) and reef managed for reserved ecosystem. Most coral reefs in Phuket are assigned as reef managed for general uses and intensive tourism zones. Public relations concerning coral reef zoning are not adequate for relevant target groups, including local fishermen. In general, fishing communities in Phuket participated actively and supported coral reef zoning. Construction of artificial reefs for fishing and tourism activities was frequently proposed by local communities to reduce pressure on natural coral reefs. Reduced fishing effort on coral reefs and elimination of destructive gear are the major concerns for involved government agencies in cooperation with local fishermen.